What is claimed as the invention is:

1. A method for analyzing the energy content of an electrical signal for detecting voice, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) digitizing the signal;

(b) defining a first threshold and a second threshold, wherein the first threshold is greater than the second threshold;

(c) comparing the digitized signal with the first threshold and the second threshold to produce a number representative of the comparison;

(d) repeating steps (b) and (c) to produce a plurality of numbers;

(e) converting the plurality of numbers into a first sum; and

(f) comparing the first sum to a third threshold, wherein a sum exceeding the third threshold is indicative of a voice signal.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said converting step includes the steps of:

weighting each number representative of a comparison; and

summing the weighted numbers.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein larger numbers receive greater weight than smaller numbers to produce a quasi-RMS calculation.

4. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including the steps of:

counting the number of numbers that exceed the first threshold;

comparing the number to a fourth threshold; and

indicating a voice signal when the first sum exceeds the third threshold and the number exceeds the fourth threshold.

5. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including the steps of:

counting the number of numbers that exceed the first threshold;

comparing the number to a fourth threshold; and

increasing the first threshold when the number is greater than the fourth threshold.

6. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including the steps of:

counting the number of numbers that are less than the second threshold;

comparing the number to a fourth threshold; and

decreasing the second threshold when the number is less than the fourth threshold.

7. The method as set forth in claim 6 and further including the step of:

not counting the number of numbers that are less than the second threshold while the first sum exceeds the third threshold.

8. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein comparing step (c) uses only the $m$ most significant bits of the digitized signal.

9. The method as set forth in claim 8 wherein $m = 6$.

10. A method for providing a digital representation of the energy content of an electrical signal, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) digitizing the signal;

(b) defining a first threshold and a second threshold, wherein the first threshold is greater than the second threshold;

(c) comparing the digitized signal with the first threshold and the second threshold to produce a number representative of the comparison;

(d) repeating steps (b) and (c) to produce a plurality of numbers;

(e) converting the plurality of numbers into a sum.

11. The method as set forth in claim 10 wherein said converting step includes the steps of:

weighting each number representative of a comparison; and

summing the weighted numbers.

12. The method as set forth in claim 11 wherein larger numbers receive greater weight than smaller numbers to produce a quasi-RMS calculation.